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ABSTRACT

This paper defines and exemplifies the "grammar of the reader." It is claimed that existing pedagogical grammars, although supposedly neutral with respect to skills, are actually biased towards production. In translating rules into the reader's perspective, reader's grammar turns them inside out. Reader's grammar does not primarily focus on rules of decoding, nor are its implications limited to reading skill. The reanalyses are of sufficient power to offer effective alternative strategies for achieving integrated, and even purely oral-aural, goals. The uniqueness of the rules of reader's grammar in both their formulation and their hierarchical relationships is demonstrated. Consequences for method of presentation and ordering in curriculum are revealed. A discussion focuses on two primary rules of reader's grammar, generalizable across languages notwithstanding certain language-particular details. The "analog rules of synthesizing and filtering" represent the integrative and selective capacities of first language reading process, but with a special twist to serve as the hitherto missing link to second language reading. (Author)

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Ungrammar

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abstract

This paper defines and exemplifies the 'grammar of the reader'. We claim that existing pedagogical grammars, although supposedly neutral with respect to skills, are actually biased towards production; in translating rules into the reader's perspective, reader's grammar literally turns them inside out. Reader's grammar does not primarily focus on rules of decoding, as might be thought; nor are its implications limited to the reading skill. Its reanalyses are of such inherent power as to offer effective alternative strategies for achieving integrated, and even purely oral-aural, goals.

Through our examples, we show the uniqueness of the rules of reader's grammar in both their formulation and in their hierarchical relationships——with consequences for both method of presentation and ordering in curriculum. In addition we focus on two primary rules of reader's grammar, generalizable across languages notwithstanding certain language-particular details. These 'analog-rules of synthesizing and filtering' represent the integrative and selective capacities of L1 reading process, but with a special twist to serve as the hitherto missing link to L2 reading.

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This paper is part of my on-going research into ways of giving reading (and written language generally) its deserved importance in ESL curriculum, and in our view of the nature of language.

DeSaussure's dictum of the primacy of speech, although outdated in ESL theory, continues to dominate our philosophy of language as it is reflected in curriculum. To be sure, current ESL courses contain a large reading component. But this component, for all its size, remains tacked on to an orientation that is, in its formative initial stages, primarily oral-aural.

In spite of a vast quantity of research into the nature of L1 reading process, I believe that we have yet to understand the specific potential of L2 reading, in such a way as to allow full exploitation of its power from the beginning of curriculum.

Numbers of directions for research into L2 reading are suggested by reader's grammar——directions that are new because they emerge from a new kind of linguistic analysis.

At the same time, there are direct implications for ESL curriculum, from utilization of reader's grammar directly, to institution of a reading component of previously unimagined ambitiousness from the beginning of elementary levels. I should emphasize that such an emphasis on reading can be expected to raise the level of achievement in other skills.

1

In order to introduce the notion 'reader's grammar', this paper will look at linguistic structure from the reader's perspective

to the point where the actual conception of linguistic structure changes. The general definition of reader's grammar will be introduced with the help of our initial example, Russian declension, which has the advantage of being more amenable to systematic analysis than any equivalently complex and comprehensive area of English syntax. (Another justification for starting with this mildly exotic phenomenon is empathy: I would in fact claim that English syntax offers a complexity greater than that of Russian declension, although of a less immediately obvious kind.)

The traditional declensional table in (1a) gives the endings for the six cases in transcription. Ø stands for zero-ending, and capital letters stand for the cases, Nominative, Accusative, Genitive, etc., through Instrumental. The accusative overlaps with nominative or genitive for most inflectional classes, as indicated by N and G in the table. This complexity will figure in later discussion.

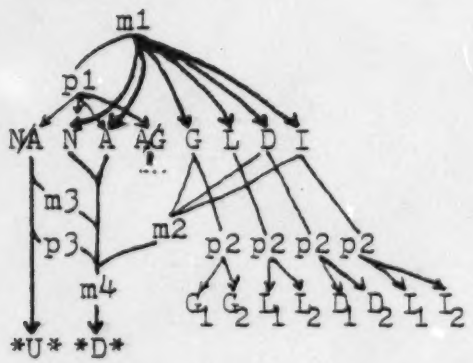
The flow-chart in (1b) outlines the actual processes that a reader would have to use, in order to interpret (parse) nouns in sentences with respect to case-meanings, in accord with the traditional analysis of case. Cases are indicated as before, with slash indicating ambiguity with respect to case. Subscripts on cases indicate (in abbreviated form) various meanings of individual cases. *D* and *U* indicate, respectively, 'decided' and 'undecided' with respect to the distinction between subject and object of the sentence. Various separate processes are labeled m1, p1, etc., for reasons that will be explained.

m1 represents the whole declensional table (1a), in that its purpose is to identify given endings as representing specific cases. Because of formal overlap between different cases, it often gives ambiguous results, as indicated for N/A/G in the chart. These

(1)(a) traditional declensional table.

	Sg Adj m	n	f	Noun m	n	f1	f2	Pl Adj	Noun
N	iy	oe	aya	Ø	o	a	Ø	ie	i,a
A	N/G	N	uyu	N/G	N	u	N	N/G	N/G
G	ogo			a		i		ix	ov,ey,Ø
L	om		oy	e		e	i		ax
D	omu			u				im	am
I	im			om		oy	yu	imi	ami

(b) case-parsing.



ambiguous cases would generally be sorted out by later rules, such as m3 (on the basis of agreement-features of the verb, etc.), but in some instances the sentence would remain 'undecided', e.g. mat' lyubit doč' 'the mother loves the daughter' or 'the daughter loves the mother'.

m2, as can be seen in (1b), merges objects, interpreting them in a unified way in spite of differences in case: these differences are abitrarily associated with verbs as lexical items, many individual verbs governing various oblique cases. To give just one example of a widespread phenomenon: (2a) must be interpreted as an object, semantically parallel to (2b), and not (as a 'literal' interpretation of the instrumental-case ending might suggest) 'to possess by means of a house'.

(2)(a)	obladaet domom	'possesses house-I':	'possesses a house'
(b)	imeet dom	'has house-A':	'has a house'

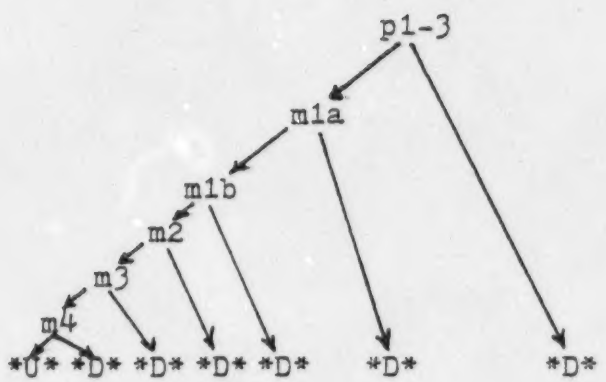
In the merging of cases previously distinguished (by m1), we observe an inefficiency of process. Such inefficiency would not be present in a productive grammar, at least if the goal if complete accuracy of production. But from the reader's perspective, it would be more efficient for all oblique cases (accusative through instrumental) to be first identified just as oblique. For many instances (e.g. (2a)), this identification would be sufficient. Where further distinction within the oblique supercategory is needed, further detail could be brought in afterwards.

This revision is accomplished in the revised declensional table in (3a). It is obvious that this table achieves greater efficiency than (1a), especially because it brings together numbers of endings of similar form (e.g. omu and two instances of om).

(3)(a) revised declensional table.

	Sg	Pl
N	iy	
	oe,aya	ie
	Ø,o,a	i,a
Obl	ogo	ov
	om,omu,im	im,am,imi,ami
		ix,ax
	oy	ey
	yu	
	u,e,i,a	Ø

(b) case-parsing.



The information contained in the revised declensional table is represented by m1a in the accompanying flow-chart for case-parsing. As noted, it would handle many instances by itself, with further subdivision of the oblique supercategory handled by m1b.

We have already exemplified two important notions of reader's grammar. The first is that of semantically-based groupings of endings, as opposed to the atomistic approach of traditional, morphologically-oriented analyses.

The second notion of reader's grammar exemplified is that of hierarchical relationship between rules, which is an ordering based on relative importance. By ordering more important rules first, we hypothesize a more efficient reading process, by letting fewer rules cover more instances.

The traditional analysis does not distinguish between relatively important and relatively unimportant distinctions. In this it is oriented towards productive skills: to the producer of sentences, each ending is in a sense an indivisible unit, needed exactly whenever it is needed. But to the reader, distinctions vary tremendously in their importance, so it is helpful for the earlier rules to be more comprehensive, with later rules reserved for sorting out residual problems just when necessary. Thus in (3b), a higher rule such as m1a covers more instances, with lower rules such as m1b kept in reserve for remaining ambiguities.

2

So far we have limited our discussion to morphological information, m-rules. It also happens to be the case that the traditional parsing analysis must make use of pragmatic information, as expressed in

p-rules. These are secondary rules in the traditional analysis; indeed, only one of them (p1) is generally included in grammatical descriptions of Russian (the reason being that they are considered too easy to require mention). But other p-rules must in fact be invoked in parsing, as the following discussion will demonstrate.

My argument will be that p-rules could be exploited far better than they are in (1b), by being merged and promoted to primacy in the hierarchy of rules. The claim is, informally, that pragmatics is a more efficient guide to identification of noun-functions in sentences than are the morphological details of endings. A simple example is given in (4), which would require m4 in (1): the reverse predicate nado 'must' is easily sorted out pragmatically, with no reference to m4, so that this m-rule can be demoted to a low position in the hierarchy, for use in a more limited number of instances.

(4) sestre nado itti 'sister-D must to-go': 'sister must go'
cf. sestra dolžna itti 'sister-N must to-go': 'sister must go'

Particularly interesting is p1, the rule which distinguishes nouns that are ambiguous for the nominative/accusative distinction from nouns that are identifiably nominative. This rule is pragmatic because it makes reference to the animacy or inanimacy of the given noun, as shown in (5).

(5) dom-Ø 'house' m.inanimate → N or A
brat-Ø 'brother' m.animate → N only

p3 is a more general pragmatic rule, taking into account all pragmatic aspects of sentence-meaning. It is necessary to disambiguate morphologically ambiguous sentences such as those in (6).

(6)(a) dom vidit mat´ 'house-N/A sees mother-N/A'
('mother sees the house')

(b) značenie imeet rezul´tat 'significance-N/A has result-N/A'
('the result has significance')

As can be seen from (6a), p3 (like p1) refers to the animacy/inanimacy of given nouns. In other words, p3 can include p1, for more efficient use of pragmatic information: p3 is promoted to a high position in the hierarchy, where p1 is merged into it (as was done in (3b).

To put the point less formally, it is intuitively obvious that inanimate nouns do not distinguish forms for subject vs. object for the simple reason that they do not have to: inanimate nouns in transitive clauses will regularly be objects (and in intransitive clauses, subjects). A morphologically-based parsing system like the traditional one cannot utilize this obviously functional fact. On the contrary, it carries each ambiguity along, continuously looking for morphological clues that might decide its status.

This functional fact is used, on the other hand, in a pragmatically-based parsing system such as the proposed one, in which the ambiguous endings will generally not even be looked at: the newly combined p1-3 will automatically assign inanimates in transitive clauses to object-function.

To conclude the review of p-rules: p2 is needed, in the traditional analysis, to disambiguate instances such as those in (7).

(7)(a) yexal noč´yu 'went night-I': 'went at night'

(b) yexal poezdom 'went train-I': 'went by train'

(It is especially interesting to note that Russian, for all its declensional complexity, exhibits ambiguities very much parallel to

those of English prepositional phrases, such as: eat bread with some butter/friends/enthusiasm.) If this rule p2 is promoted to higher status in the hierarchy, it can take over some of the dirty work of morphological interpretation, so that the complexity of the different verbs 'teach' in (8) can be cut through without multiple m-rules.

(8)(a) učit sestru russkomu 'teaches sister-A Russian-D'

(b) prepodaet sestre russkiy 'teaches sister-D Russian-A'

We should note in passing that the newly combined p-rules will often ignore morphological information, even in non-ambiguous instances like (9a). In so doing, it is simply ignoring redundancies—material that is present but not necessary for interpretation——in a way that seems consistent with what is known about native-speaker reading process. The price that must be paid is that nonsense sentences such as (9b) would be regularly misinterpreted, in the parsing-system as we have outlined it in (3b). The implicit claim would be that such

(9)(a) dom vidit brat 'The house-N/A sees brother-N'
('Brother sees the house')

(b) ?dom vidit brata 'The house-N/A sees brother-A'
('The house sees brother')

sentences, where they do occur, must be provided with enough external context to override the pragmatically more straightforward analysis. (I can also note in my defense that only the high-level m1a would have to be referred to for exact comprehension; empirical research on the actual tendencies of fluent native readers would be relevant here.)

We can summarize the difference between the traditional analysis and reader's grammar by contrasting the types of formal process they

involve, namely algorithm vs. heuristic. An algorithm is a procedure for computing a definite answer in a finite amount of time. It is the typical kind of computer-procedure in the traditional sense: it is crucially concerned with accuracy (determinateness), and unconcerned about the amount of time used——as long as it is finite.

By contrast, a heuristic is a more flexible kind of procedure, used by chess-playing computers that learn from their own mistakes. More generally, it is a procedure that does try to achieve efficiency. It is a strategy for efficient computation of answers, and, as the price for efficiency, it accepts its own fallibility, in that each answer is subject to revision in the light of subsequent processing.

3

We are now in a position to apply the notions of reader's grammar to the more interesting——and more challenging——domain of the English auxiliary (including tense and agreement marking on the verb).

An initial point, extremely important although often overlooked, is that the auxiliary exhibits a morphological complexity to rival that of Russian declension. Although the number of morphemes is not high, they co-occur and intertwine syntactically, as well as overlapping with each other, in ways that must cause hair-raising difficulty to any morpheme-by-morpheme analysis. For example, the contrast between has writt-en, is writt-en, and is writ-ing is extremely complex from a morphological point of view, although of course these are not the most complex combinations that the auxiliary-system has to offer.

This morphological complexity is accompanied by a semantic elusiveness, which plagues teachers and students of ESL alike.

For example, the progressive aspect does not always stick to its classical durative meaning, but sometimes indicates a straightforward iterative meaning: Is your brother-in-law working now? It is important to note that the meaning-shift is not necessarily signaled by any morphological or lexical marking: now is either durative or iterative.

Similarly, the participial clause can exhibit, apart from its classical meaning of simultaneous action (10a), a full spectrum of meanings ranging from precondition (b) to result (c).

(10) Spock jumped into the Black Hole,....

(a) ...holding a rocket that he hoped would bring him out.

(b) ...believing that it was an optical illusion.

(c) ...showing that it was an optical illusion.

Our natural tendency, as linguists and language-teachers, is to focus on formal indications of distinctions, e.g. to note that the participial-clause of result cannot precede the main clause: *Showing that it was an optical illusion, Spock jumped into the Black Hole. Reliable as this test may be for isolating result-clauses from the other types, it is not adequate to distinguish precondition-clauses from those of simultaneous action, which can both precede the main clause freely. Just as important, this test fails to distinguish at all when the clauses are in fact in the position following the main clause——as of course they might well be in a given text!

The reader does not have the option of asking for paraphrases that might provide the necessary morphological clues, and the reader's grammar must deal with this fact. In other words, a grammatical description that did not provide the means to distinguish (10a-c) would be clearly inadequate for reader's grammar. Of course the means to distinguish them are readily available in pragmatics.

It is sometimes thought that pragmatics is so easy, as well as being language-universal, that it does not have to be taught at all. I would emphasize, in disagreement with this view, that disproportionate focus on morphological and syntactic detail can suppress whatever native pragmatic ability the ESL learner has, and can thus hinder later development of pragmatic inferencing in reading; early practice in sentence-level inferencing, by contrast, will inevitably help development of broader inferencing skills.

In addition, there are language-particular aspects to the role of pragmatics in sentence-comprehension. For example, there is nothing universal about the specific range of meanings exhibited by participial clauses: other languages may not exhibit the same range of meanings, where they have structures analogous to participial clauses at all. Thus it is important to focus on the limits of meaning variation of given structures, while practicing pragmatic interpretation.

I am thus suggesting that the search for minimal pairs, however useful for the teaching of productive language-skills, is fundamentally misdirected as far as the needs of the reader are concerned. What I suggest is significant from a structural point of view is that English chooses to be so neglectful of certain semantic distinctions that it allows their formal suppression. Instead of minimal pairs, I suggest that we search for what we might call 'maximal pairs': pairs of sentences that exhibit the limits of a range of meanings, with no (or little) formal contrast between them. (10)(b) and (c) constitute such a maximal pair.

To move on to modal auxiliaries: there is a logically clear as well as important distinction between deontic and epistemic uses of various modals, the former indicating obligation while the latter

indicates probability, as exemplified in (11).

(11)(a) Criminals must be punished. (deontic)

(b) Sam must be fat: he just broke the chair. (epistemic)

Deontic meanings are generally more normal, but epistemic meanings are certainly encountered, and must be adequately prepared for.

There is a temptation to look for tangible clues to signal the contrast. To be sure, result-verbs will tend to occur with deontic auxiliaries, and stative predicates with epistemics. But such generalizations do not cover all possible combinations, many of which therefore remain ambiguous; furthermore, even the limited principle has exceptions, e.g. You must be tall to be a policeman. Similarly the progressive aspect tends to occur with epistemic auxiliaries, but not exceptionlessly so, as can be seen in the 'maximal pair' (12).

(12)(a) I left the water running at home, so I must be leaving.

(b) I have my coat and hat on, so I must be leaving.

(The intonation differences are part of the further formal marking which is simply too complex to be of real use for comprehension purposes.)

The deontic/epistemic contrast is spread not only throughout the system of modals (can, may) and other auxiliaries (have to), but all through the semantic class of obligation and probability. Thus, necessary, although primarily deontic, has important epistemic uses, as shown in (13); similarly for supposed to (14). Conversely, bound to, while more frequently epistemic, can be deontic (15b).

(13)(a) Electrons are necessarily negative.

(b) What conditions are both necessary and sufficient?

(14) The dam is supposed to break at 2 a.m.

(15)(a) Loan sharks are bound to charge ridiculous interest.

(b) The bank is bound by law to charge 18% interest.

Furthermore, there are miscellaneous other variations in the meanings of auxiliaries, not only the somewhat important (16), but even such annoyances as (17), which one would prefer not intrude on the learner's active knowledge, although there is no way he can be protected from its occurrence in text for very long.

(16) A dollar is all you <u>have to</u> spend. (ambiguous)

(17) If you <u>should</u> misspell many words, you may flunk the exam.

As these and other possible examples ought to show, the real goal of teaching meaning-variation in the auxiliary should not be active mastery of all the semantic and morphological details: the real goal should be to teach enough receptive flexibility so that the ESL reader can deal with encountered examples in pragmatic terms, even though he has not learned these details actively.

At this point we can lay to rest any suspicion that reader's grammar, or more generally an early focus on a fairly sophisticated reading skill, is in any way incompatible with an integrated curriculum. For the outcome of an early recognition of receptive flexibility will be to release the active skills from the overwhelming burden of comprehensiveness. Speaking can focus on the subset of meanings actually necessary for effective communication, leaving distracting alternatives as part of what must be known passively. Thus, an early division between active and passive knowledge contributes to efficiency of learning in both, as well as creating a dichotomy that will be vitally important at later levels.

4

A primary device of reader's grammar, it will be recalled, is grouping of morphologically distinct items according to semantic similarity. Each column in (18) is such a grouping.

(18)

REAL: do		IMAGINED		
RESULT	PROCESS	DEPENDENT	NECESSARY	POSSIBLE
en ed	ing	will shall would	must should ought	can could may might

Each column happens to be, as well, a spectrum of meanings, with higher elements more definitely implying the realization of the given action than lower ones. Thus, can is more definite than might (with could and may intermediate in definiteness). Similarly, must is more definite than should (this comparison holds whether must is considered in deontic or epistemic sense). Similarly, will and shall are more definite than would in that they depend only on the realization of an intention, while the latter depends on some more specific condition (usually but not always specified by the context). Their overlap in meaning is exemplified in such parallels as (19).

(19)(a) Will you do this for me?

(b) Would you do this for me?

Because the names for columns are, by their nature, fairly abstract, the notion of spectrum is helpful in justifying the groupings as posited. For many purposes, however, it is appropriate to suppress the meaning-variation implied by the spectrum——as indeed it is appropriate to suppress all details of meaning-variation within groupings, since their usefulness derives from being treated

in a unified way. More specifically, attention should be drawn to the spectrum within each column at a point in the curriculum well after they have been treated as unities.

Another, more important spectrum of meanings, again in terms of definiteness, can be seen in the relationship between the three columns of modal auxiliaries (called 'imagined' in (18)): the 'dependent' column as a whole is more definite than the 'necessary' column, and the latter more definite than the 'possible' column.

Certainly the division between the three columns is necessary at an early point in curriculum. And yet I would also argue for the coherence of the whole 'imagined' group, as a semantic supercategory that is morphologically coherent, including all of the modal auxiliaries. If my argument holds, the claimed semantic unity should be relevant to the description of auxiliaries in curriculum (although perhaps not relevant to sequencing in a one-to-one way). To the extent that my analysis avoids misleading implications of traditional analyses, and more generally conforms better to what the auxiliaries actually do in texts, it can of course be expected to contribute to facilitation of the difficult task of teaching the reading of texts that have not been translated into 'ESLese'.

The general function of the modal auxiliaries, in my analysis, is to 'distance' the given action from reality. Any sequence of the form Modal & Verb assumes that the action of the verb has not taken place, or at least assumes that it is the general assumption that the action has not taken place. (The latter description would apply to epistemic modals.)

This assumption of distance from reality, i.e. that the action is 'imagined' rather than real, is the presuppositional background

of the 'imagined' class: the purpose of the modals is to address itself to this background, and in fact attribute to the action a new reality, i.e. to assert, with various degrees of 'definiteness' (as discussed) that the action will/must/can take place.

For an interesting comparison, (20) cites instances of a Norwegian auxiliary that covers various parts of the 'imagined' group. (The relationship of <u>få</u> and <u>fikk</u> is too complex to be discussed here: in any case, our later discussion of the rest of the auxiliary system of English would be relevant for sorting out details of the Norwegian auxiliary.)

(20)(a)	Der som lever, får se.	'He who survives will see'
(b)	Vi får se!	'We ___ see!'
(c)	Du får nok gjøre som jeg sier.	'You ____ do as I say'
(d)	Får jeg komme inn?	'___ I come in?'
(e)	Du får gjøre som du vil.	'You ___ do as you like'

The 'correct' answers are: (b) shall, (c) ought to, (d) may, (e) may; but it is interesting to note how little the meaning changes if others are chosen. The main clues for meaning are subject pronouns and type and mode of action (the latter as cued by punctuation), along with pragmatics in general. Where auxiliaries are distinguished in details of meaning and use, the pragmatic rules are reflected as details of usage, e.g. the invitation <u>Shall we dance?</u>, rather than <u>Will we dance?</u> or <u>Would we dance?</u> The form of invitations is an inevitably tricky detail for productive command of English, but for comprehension it can be subsumed under pragmatic comprehension strategies.

The more morphologically oriented traditional analysis of the modal auxiliaries has often implied the misleading equation of

their function with that of modal verbs, such as Spanish deber. The fuzziness of their semantic characteristics, however, suggests regarding them as morphological expressions of mood——more like the Spanish subjunctive in this regard. Modal auxiliaries are not lexical items, but rather functors, analogous to morphological inflection in syntactic and semantic terms.

A primary distinction is often made, also on morphological grounds that I will claim are superficial and misleading, between the various tenses of English. To be sure, a command of English conjugation is vital to productive command of the language; and yet, excessive emphasis on the productive skills can also twist the analysis of the language, distorting the actual functioning of its structure to a point that a healthy dose of reader's perspective is needed quite apart from the goal of effective reading, as well as being vitally important to this important goal.

We are sometimes so concerned over delicacies like the present perfect that we forget how elusive even such basic notions as past tense are, both in principle and to native-speakers of languages without tense (such as Vietnamese).

The category of the 'real' in (18) is contrasted with that of the 'imagined', as already discussed. As a unified supercategory, the 'real' is morphologically represented by simple verb forms (such as put, and also the more typical irregular verb, with distinguished forms like take/took), as well as the non-modal auxiliary do, when it occurs. This supercategory should not be thought of as merely bunching together past and present, since it covers real parts of the future as well, as in going to have a baby (equivalent to is pregnant). 'Process', as expressed by the auxiliary going to, and

more typically by the progressive (and indeed other uses of _-ing_), is in fact the continuation of the definiteness spectrum considered earlier for the modal auxiliaries. This spectrum continues into the category of 'result', comprehending both past and passive, as we will discuss below.

First it is appropriate to mention two non-modal auxiliaries, _have_ and _be_. Although these are perhaps better analyzed as mere parts of auxiliaries (_have-en_, _be-en_, _be-ing_) for productive grammar, the complexity of the analysis recommends against it for reader's grammar. Indeed, when our focus broadens to include _have to_ and _be to_, we see that no coherent meanings at all can be associated with either _have_ or _be_. Meanings are better derived from the other, associated morphemes, _-en_ or _to_. The latter can indeed be associated with various submeanings in the 'imagined' category: NECESSARY (_have to_, _be to_) and DEPENDENT (_going to_, which can thus be seen as an overlap between 'process' and 'dependent', a refinement of earlier discussion). To summarize: _to_ is promoted to a higher position in the hierarchy of reader's rules, while _have_ and _be_ are demoted. By similar reasoning, _-en_ is promoted——just as the present ending is demoted (principally because of its morphological overlap with the plural and possessive endings).

To group past and passive together in a larger category of 'result' opposes a basic tenet of traditional (Latin-based) English grammar. But we have noted that reader's grammar urges the investigator not to look for distinctions, but rather to compile lists of distinctions that are indicated in an inconsistent way, suggesting, from a functional point of view, that the distinction is less important than might be thought. Beyond the very overlap between past and passive in morphological terms, analysis of the passive itself turns up numbers of significant surprises.

The general analysis of the passive amounts to merging it with the resultative: these two forms are minimally distinguished, as shown by the 'maximal pair' in (21).

(21)(a) The chair was broken slowly. (passive)

(b) The chair was completely broken. (resultative)

In transformational grammar (and even case-grammar), the passive as a morphological category is regarded as a secondary detail accompanying the supposedly primary NP-switch. In such an analysis, the overlap with the resultative construction is regarded as accidental. Also unavoidably regarded as incidental is the omission of the agent in the passive——although this is the overwhelmingly common usage, if not indeed the very function, of the passive as a construction.

The focus on NP-switch not only misses the function of the passive: it also implies a mistaken functional importance for NP-placement, which is true neither to the passive, nor to the language as a whole. The often made analogy between English NP-order and Latin cases is a spurious one, for English is often surprisingly neglectful of such contrasts as subject vs. object. The familiar example of an ambiguous sentence, The chicken is ready to eat, would not obtain as an ambiguous sentence in numbers of other languages. The very freeness with which English tolerates reversible verbs such as open, break, develop, begin (22) is evidence of less interest in the subject/object contrast.

(22)(a) Jack opened the door.

(b) The door opened.

This point is made more dramatic when juxtaposed with the presence of fairly free object-deletion in English, including both specific nouns and reflexives, as can be seen in the different meanings of

wash in (23).

(23)(a) The boys washed before dinner, and cleared after dinner.

(b) The boys cleared and washed after dinner.

Many other languages would not tolerate the morphological ambiguity of (22-23), nor such examples as (24-25).

(24)(a) This book reads well.

(b) This pen writes well.

(c) This article is writing slowly.

(25) Are you finished? Yes, I'm done.

As (25) shows, not all overlaps between past and passive are archaisms like I am come; cf. also He is gone. The falling together of the perfect and passive auxiliaries has and is in contracted 's is a more widespread example relevant to spoken language.

Examples such as the above could be multiplied endlessly: they are not exceptional, however seldom they may be encountered in certain varieties of 'ESLese'.

They show the complication that must necessarily result if past and passive are distinguished in clear semantic terms in initial presentations. This complication may be a small price to pay under certain conditions (e.g. teaching an oral-aural course to speakers of languages with tense-systems): surely it can be overcome subsequently. But perhaps even then it should not be overcome by treating such examples as unrelated exceptions: surely instead a general focus on abstract supercategories such as 'result' is the right way to approach all of the exceptions in a unified way, as learners begin to confront the language as a whole. But I am also claiming that this confrontation can happen much earlier in curriculum than has generally been assumed.

5

Although ESL has done much in recent years to introduce psycholinguistic reading principles into curriculum, it has done so primarily at advanced levels. I believe that this deferral of psycholinguistic reading results from too direct importation of native-language applications: ESL applications overlook not only the special problems, but also the special opportunities, of L2 reading.

Even at advanced levels, I believe that more could be done to teach psycholinguistic reading, with skim-reading of books as well as articles, and also with specially contrived techniques. For example, reading in specially distorted English such as exemplified in (26) is not only a useful technique for testing reading fluency, but could also be used to teach it.

(26)

Øf yØØ Ørø øxpørØØncøng døfføcØltø øn øttømptøng tø døcØphør thøs møssØgø,
thøn yØØ Ørø prØbØblø jøst høldøng thø pØgø tØØ dørn cløsø.

But for all their potential value, such techniques are in direct opposition to the algorithmic, morphological orientation of elementary curriculum. It seems doubtful that an adult can undo an early focus on morphological detail within a year or two, where the native child is allowed a whole decade. We could facilitate the task of the non-native adult by giving him a truly multiskill curriculum, in which psycholinguistic reading principles are taught from the very beginning, long before perfect oral-aural competence is achieved (even in a limited domain).

My interest then is less with a direct theory of L1 reading competence than with a model of how L2 reading could reach optimal

efficiency and power. This focus does not imply a general bias against empirical research, although it does express a reservation about the meaningfulness that can be achieved by research that does not make use of such analytic preliminaries as reader's grammar. To the extent that reading research makes use of other categories than those of reader's grammar, these categories must be either vague or not really hospitable to the reader's perspective. More generally, the kind of analytic focus on reading that we have pursued here can provide a greater variety of research tools, such as the notation of (26).

Empirical research could well focus on how well non-native readers are capable of multilevel interactive processing to the extent that native readers are, and if so, at what cost (in terms of amount of instruction, etc.). Even for native readers, there is a surprising lack of research focus on the extent of automatic linkage between motivations for reading and predominant types of processing. It is possible, for example, that the L2 reader, even after he is capable of reading psycholinguistically, will 'lapse' into morphological analysis in lazy reading——almost the opposite of the native reader; if so, then more is needed than the means to teach psycholinguistic reading alone, although the need is great for these means as well.

What I propose, then, is that analytic research should be directed at specifying 'analog-rules' for reading. By 'analog-rules' I mean statements of reading strategies that offer effective modeling of reading comprehension, but not necessarily in the sense of being psychologically realistic as a model of actual L1 reading processes. An analog-rule of 'filtering', for example, would teach active suppression of distracting morphological information, and thus provide invariance for lexical items. Such lexical invariance, from

what we know of Simple Codes and L2 learner errors, will inevitably contribute to ease of learning.

An analog-rule of 'synthesizing' would provide the complementary capacity to integrate whole sentence-meanings out of its lexical constituents. Implicit in such a principle is the priority that I have argued should be given to pragmatic strategies for comprehension.

Such pragmatic strategies are, it might be noted, at variance with the traditional form of ESL exercises, especially those that have a single correct answer, and rather little communicative import. For this reason I conclude with an outline of a kind of drill that would be congenial to the proposed ordering of priorities, in a way that will contribute to more effective teaching of all skills, although primarily inspired by the desire to put the power of reading process at the disposal of learners.

(27) Natural Drill.

(a) The drill calls for semantic and pragmatic (not grammatical) understanding. Semantic ranges are emphasized, and grammatical contrasts de-emphasized. (Cf. 'maximal pairs'.)

(b) There may be one or more correct answers per item. The purpose is not to "cover" discrete points, but rather to practice full pragmatic understanding, and thus develop competent, flexible use of strategies.

(c) Sentences exemplifying grammatical features are introduced secondarily, and without contrasting pairs. Mention of grammatical features is permitted only after many examples have been encountered——and dealt with successfully in semantic-pragmatic terms.

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